

# Montford Point Marines Awarded Congressional Gold Medal

June 27, 2012

WASHINGTON — The Congressional Gold Medal was presented collectively to the Montford Point Marines today at a ceremony held in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. The gold medal, authorized by Public Law 112–59 and struck by the United States Mint, was awarded to the Montford Point Marines in recognition of their personal sacrifice and service to their country during World War II.

The Montford Point Marines were the first black Americans to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps after President Franklin Roosevelt issued an Executive Order establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission in June 1941. The recruits trained at Camp Montford Point near Jacksonville, North Carolina. On February 19, 1945, black Marines of the 8th Ammunition Company and the 36th Depot Company landed on the island of Iwo Jima. The largest number of black Marines to serve in combat during World War II took part in the seizure of Okinawa, with approximately 2,000 seeing action. Some of the Marines also participated in amphibious landings on Peleliu and Saipan. More than 19,000 blacks served in the Marine Corps during World War II, with approximately 13,000 of them serving in units overseas.

The medal's obverse (heads side) design features three Montford Point Marines in varying uniforms with an action scene from training filling the lower portion of the palette. Inscriptions on the rim of the medal are *MONTFORD POINT MARINES, 1942 and 1949*, the year the U.S. Marine Corps was integrated. United States Mint Sculptor–Engraver Michael Gaudio designed and sculpted the medal's obverse.

The medal's reverse (tails side) design depicts Montford Point Marines in formation during training, with the signature water tower, a notable feature to all Montford Point Marines, in the background. Inscriptions are *FOR OUTSTANDING PERSEVERANCE* and *COURAGE* that *INSPIRED SOCIAL CHANGE* in the *MARINE CORPS, 2011* and *ACT OF CONGRESS*. United States Mint Sculptor–Engraver Don Everhart designed and sculpted the medal's reverse.

Bronze reproductions of the medal, also authorized by Public Law 112–59, will be available for purchase from the United States Mint beginning at noon (ET) on June 28. The three-inch medal is priced at \$44.95, and the one and one-half inch medal is priced at \$7.95. Orders will be accepted via the bureau's online catalog at <http://www.usmint.gov/catalog> or at 1–800–USA–MINT (872–6468). Hearing- and speech-impaired customers with TTY equipment may order by calling 1–888–321–MINT (6468). Presentation cases are also available separately. A \$4.95 shipping and handling charge is added to all domestic orders.

The United States Mint was created by Congress in 1792. This year marks the bureau's 220th anniversary. The United States Mint is the Nation's sole manufacturer of legal tender coinage and is responsible for producing circulating coinage for the Nation to conduct its trade and commerce. The United States Mint also produces proof, uncirculated and commemorative coins; Congressional Gold Medals; and silver, gold and platinum bullion coins.

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